



**PRESS RELEASE from the
LIBERTY JUSTICE CENTER**

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Republicans to appeal judge's ruling on Gov. Pritzker's gatherings ban

CHICAGO (July 2, 2020) – Today, a federal judge denied a request from the Illinois Republican Party and three local party committees for equal treatment under Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker's Executive Order limiting the size of gatherings. The ruling issued by Judge Sara L. Ellis of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois comes as most Illinoisans are barred from gathering in groups of more than 50 people.

"Today's order is disappointing but we are confident in our argument in favor of political parties' right to equal treatment to exercise their First Amendment rights. We are immediately appealing the decision," said **Patrick Hughes, president and co-founder of the Liberty Justice Center.**

Background: The Illinois Republican Party and three local Republican party committees filed a federal lawsuit against Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker over his ban on gatherings of 50 or more people. The lawsuit, *Illinois Republican Party v. Pritzker*, was filed June 16, 2020, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The Illinois Republican Party, Schaumburg Township Republican Organization, Northwest Side GOP Club and Will County Republican Central Committee are represented by attorneys from the Liberty Justice Center, the Chicago-based public interest law firm that won a landmark First Amendment case at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018.

Last month, the governor marched in and endorsed large-scale rallies with crowds numbering in the thousands, yet other political speech groups including the Republicans are banned from gathering under Pritzker's Executive Order. Attorneys are asking the court to take immediate action to allow the party to operate in-person events in the run-up to the November 2020 election.

The lawsuit highlights the selectivity and arbitrary nature of Pritzker's Executive Order regarding group gatherings. Some groups can exercise their First Amendment rights, while others face restrictions and the threat of criminal penalties for violating the governor's order.

Illinois Republican Party v. Pritzker is one of three lawsuits the Liberty Justice Center has filed in recent weeks against Gov. Pritzker over constitutional violations during the coronavirus pandemic. First, Liberty Justice Center attorneys represented Salem Media and journalist Amy Jacobson in *Salem Media v. Pritzker* after the governor banned Jacobson from press briefings. In a victory for First Amendment rights, the governor's office reversed its decision and reinstated Jacobson's press credentials. In another case, the Liberty Justice Center represents the Illinois Right to Life in a challenge to the governor's ban on gatherings.

Case filings are available here: <https://libertyjusticecenter.org/cases/illinois-republican-party-v-pritzker>

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The Liberty Justice Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public-interest litigation center that represents clients at no charge and was founded to fight against political privilege. The most recent example of the Liberty Justice Center's national success in this arena is its 2018 U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Janus v. AFSCME*. Beyond its work in the *Janus* case, the Liberty Justice Center's team of talented, liberty-minded attorneys also fight to protect economic liberty, private property rights, free speech, school choice and other fundamental rights. The Liberty Justice Center pursues its goals through strategic, precedent-setting litigation to revitalize constitutional restraints on government power and protections for individual rights. Learn more about the Liberty Justice Center at LibertyJusticeCenter.org.

